

Motives for European Exploration of the Pacific in the Age of the Enlightenment¹

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ABSTRACT: In this paper the ambivalent character of the Enlightenment ideology that was employed to justify the Pacific voyages of the late eighteenth century is explored. Parallels are drawn between the Spanish Christian justifications for the earlier wave of European expansion into the Pacific (chiefly in the sixteenth century) with that employed in this later period. It is concluded that, though in both cases there was a high level of rationalization, such ideologies required at least some measure of perceived dissonance with self-interest to be credible.

WHAT WAS IT THAT prompted Europeans of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to condemn themselves to long and dangerous voyages in fragile wooden vessels that, as Cook found on the Great Barrier Reef, were all too vulnerable to the vagaries of unknown lands? The perennial motives of a quest for strategic and economic advantage played a large part in this, as in most ages, but what is interesting is the extent to which such motives were combined or, at least to some extent, masked by the quest for knowledge both of the natural and human world. Consequently, exploration could be regarded as consistent with the goals of the Enlightenment and the motto that Kant attributed to it: “Aude sapere” (Dare to know). In this paper the ways in which such proclaimed goals shaped the actual practice of Pacific exploration are explored.

GOD, GOLD, AND GLORY: THE SPANISH AND THE PACIFIC

The Pacific voyages of the late eighteenth century had, of course, been preceded by the extraordinary explosion outward of the Spanish and Portuguese in the fifteenth and

sixteenth centuries. Their motives were evident enough and often stated: the quest for gold, God, and glory as the crusading spirit, which had led to the reconquest of Spain from the Muslims, then spilled out onto the larger global arena with the burning ambition to claim new souls for the Holy Catholic Church and new wealth and territory for the king of Spain.

In this period, then, idealism of another sort combined with and, to some extent, colored the quest for direct economic or national advantage as religion justified action. Such idealism was given a quasi-legal form with the argument that the pope had the power, as overlord of Christendom, to authorize such conquest provided it was done with the intention of bringing more souls within the community of the faithful. A more sophisticated version of this argument was that of the great Dominican jurist Francisco de Vitoria, who argued, in lectures delivered at Salamanca in 1539, that, though the pope's temporal power might be questioned, he did have a “regulating authority.” Such an authority should conform to the canons of natural law that provided the legal basis for the relations between nations—including those between the king of Spain and the Indians of the New World. In Vitoria's exposition the extension of royal power could be justified on the grounds of Christian proselytizing, but he was plainly uneasy about the use of force and preferred an empire based on

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trade (which came closer to the Portuguese practice) (Parry 1990: 137).

Religious idealism, then, did not always suit national needs, as the king of Spain found when his nation's reputation was blackened by the impassioned denunciation of the behavior of the conquistadors by the missionary Bartolomé de Las Casas. In this earlier phase of exploration the religious justification for conquest as a means of extending the reach of Christendom and bringing more souls to the Christian heaven did have a two-edged character. It could act as an often thinly veiled excuse for ruthless conquest and exploitation, but, in theory at least, it also acted as something of a brake on the excesses of the conquistadors. Las Casas, for example, was bold enough to admonish the Spanish king, urging him to recognize that "the only title that Your Majesty has is this: that all, or the greater part of the Indians, wish voluntarily to be your vassals and hold it an honor to be so" (Pagden 1995: 51). Although Las Casas accepted the view that Spain had a papally sanctioned mandate to spread the Gospel, it was one subject to definite ethical restrictions. These went no further than allowing Catholic monarchs to "induce the peoples who live in such islands and lands to receive the Catholic religion, save that you never inflict upon them hardships and dangers." The fact that the Spanish had not done this provided the Indians with cause to wage a "just war" (Las Casas 1992: xvi-xvii). As the scholarship of Pagden has brought out, whatever the often brutal reality in America, on the distant Iberian peninsula academics at universities such as Salamanca and Coimbra engaged in long and arduous debate about the ethics of conquest and the religious status of the peoples of the New World (Pagden 1982: 104-143, 1995: 46-51).

The almost manic determination of the conquistadors waned by the seventeenth century, and the attempt by Mendana (1568 and 1595) and Quiros (1606) to open up new territories in the Pacific in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries met with little response from the Spanish Crown (Beaglehole 1966: 106). Part of the reason for this was the fact that the Pacific islands seemed to hold

few riches, but even Quiros' impassioned plea to bring these new souls to Christ was received with scant enthusiasm by a regime that was increasingly the creature of its own bureaucracy and that had more than enough work cut out to absorb the vast territories added to its domains in Central and South America.

Nonetheless, the argument that the Spanish Crown had an obligation to spread the reach of Christendom could not be easily overlooked—like many ideological systems it had a life of its own that did not always conform readily to the immediate needs of the imperial power. Quiros was quietened by making vague undertakings about missionary activity that might be sponsored by the viceroy of Peru whom Quiros accompanied on his return from Spain. Though the problem of dealing with Quiros' inconvenient appeal to the governing ideals of the Spanish empire was solved with his death on that voyage in 1615, it continued to prick the consciences of the Spanish overlords. As late as 1630-1633 there were vain Franciscan appeals to the Crown to mount a mission to the Pacific islands that Mendana and Quiros had brought under Spanish gaze (Spate 1979: 142).

So, after this frenetic wave of activity, principally in the sixteenth century, Europe's involvement in the Pacific was largely quiescent apart from the Spanish consolidation of its power in the Philippines and the growth of the Dutch rigorously commercial hold on the East Indies. The initiative of the energetic Dutch governor of the East Indies, Van Diemen, to send Abel Tasman in 1642 on a voyage of exploration to New Holland and New Zealand, as the Dutch termed these territories, only confirmed the Dutch view that little wealth was to be gained from these uncharted lands. Consequently, the Dutch, like the Spanish, devoted their energies to making money out of the territories they already possessed. Other European regimes on the whole were willing to accept Spanish claims that the Pacific was part of their sphere of influence largely out of indifference—thus the Pacific remained a Spanish lake (Schurz 1922).

SCIENCE AND COMMERCE: THE AMBIVALENT
MOTIVES OF LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
PACIFIC EXPLORATION

The Pacific was, however, to be awakened from its slumbers and brought firmly into the mixed crosscurrents of European imperial expansion in the period from 1763 onward. In that year Europe concluded one of the major chapters in the ongoing "second hundred years' war" between France and Britain for world dominance, with Britain left largely secure in its dominance of North America and, to a lesser extent, of India. Pressures that had been building up for Britain to use its naval might more effectively in securing new territories were now more likely to be realized as the burden of war was removed and as Britain could bask more self-confidently in its great power status. Both eighteenth-century French advocates of Pacific exploration like de Brosse and British like Callandar and Dalrymple had urged the possibility of a Great Southern Land, the mass of which would balance the vast tracts of land in the Northern Hemisphere (Dunmore 1965–1969, 1:47, 50, 190). Having largely secured dominance in North America, Britain was anxious to do likewise in any new large territory that the Pacific might harbor, and it was confident that, if necessary, it could defy Spain in achieving that goal. The result was the voyage of John Byron from 1764 to 1766, which achieved little, and the joint voyages of Wallis and Carteret in 1767, which opened up Tahiti to the gaze of Europe.

Not to be outdone, the French soon afterward dispatched the voyage of Bougainville in 1768, which further confirmed in European minds the myth of Tahiti as a new Garden of Eden. The defeat in the Seven Years' War made France more determined than ever not to allow the British to gain an advantage in the quest for new territories and riches. Appropriately, Bougainville had been one of those involved in the surrender of the French stronghold of Quebec in one of the key battles of the Seven Years' War. He was driven, too, by the hope of reducing British dominance in the "new world" of the Pacific,

with the Falkland Islands armed by either the French or their then allies, the Spanish, serving as a brake on British ambitions in the eastern Pacific (Dunmore 1965–1969, 1:59). Such voyages were to be the curtain-raisers, as it were, of the great voyages of Cook and, from the French side, of the voyages of La Pérouse (1785–1788) and, subsequently, of D'Entrecasteaux (1791–1793) and Baudin (1800–1804).

So the motives for exploration were, in part, the familiar ones of great power rivalry and the quest for new territories as sources of wealth. But what was striking about the Pacific voyages of the late eighteenth century, and what distinguished them from the earlier voyages of the Spanish and the Portuguese, was the extent to which they were linked to the advancement of science and knowledge more generally. Where the Iberian explorers justified their exploration in religious terms, the late eighteenth-century explorers were more likely to invoke more secular justification consistent with the worldview of the Enlightenment. It was a transition that testified to the impact of the worldview of the Scientific Revolution on the European elite. Perhaps, too, the divisive consequences of religious warfare in the seventeenth century had prompted a quest for more secular justifications for action in exploration as in law and politics. Scientific exploration had the benefit of being based on canons of inquiry that could transcend the confessional divide and that were closely associated with notions of natural law on which European jurists like the Salamanca school and the Dutch Grotius or the German Pufendorf had attempted to erect systems of international law. The question then presents itself: how far did such an ideology prescribe limits on action as well as justification for it, as the earlier Spanish appeal to Christian idealism had?

As with the Iberian exploration of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there is plenty of evidence that exploration was linked to those hardy perennials of human nature: commercial and strategic advantage. But, just as the Iberian conquerors felt the obligation at least to construct a theoretical justification for their actions, so, too, the

late eighteenth-century explorers appealed to higher motives. In 1767, just after Bougainville had set off on the first of France's major voyages of Pacific discovery, one French memorialist urged further activity to discover the great southern continent. He appealed principally to commercial advantage (and, in particular, to the advantage that would accrue to France in the trade with China), but also argued that such lands would provide a great "quarry for the sciences" (Bibliothèque Nationale, NAF 9439, 52, De Lozur Bouch, "Mémoire touchant la Découverte des Terres Australes").

When Bougainville returned, he, too, appealed to a mixture of scientific idealism and national advantage in urging further Pacific exploration in 1773. On the one hand he acknowledged the need for further surreptitious activity against the British, but, on the other, he stressed the worth of such exploration to assist in "perfecting the knowledge of the globe" (Bibliothèque Nationale, NAF 9439, 70v, Bougainville to the Minister of the Marine, 27 February 1773). At very much the same time the great naturalist Buffon was also endeavoring to advance the cause of Pacific exploration by appealing to similarly mixed motives in relation to the proposal for a second voyage by Kerguelen—the glory that could accrue to France by the promotion of scientific enquiry, which could also rebound to its commercial advantage (Archives Nationales, B/4/317, no. 111, Buffon to M. le Duc d'Anguillon, 2 January 1773).

It is interesting that there is no reference to the sort of ideals to which the Spanish had earlier appealed even though these had loomed large in another attempt, as recently as 1735, to institute a search for the fabled Gonneville Land—the great Southern Continent that Sieur de Gonneville had improbably claimed to have discovered in 1504. "The Glory of God," wrote the French India Company captain Jean-Baptiste-Charles Bouvet de Lozier in his *mémoire* to the Crown, "and the interests of religion require us to carry out this undertaking; very likely these various countries are inhabited by numerous peoples who are groaning in the shadows of death. One cannot hasten too

much to bring them the torch of the Gospel." But, he added with an aside about the Dutch and English Protestants that underlined the intertwining of the appeal to idealism with that to advantage: "one must apprehend that our neighbours who are separated from the church may forestall us in order to increase their trade" (Dunmore 1965–1969, 1:197).

But such attempts to mobilize the French state on religious grounds seem largely to have faded in the second half of the century and increasingly to have been replaced by appeals to the uses of Pacific exploration as a means of promoting knowledge. This reflected the extent to which the attitudes associated with the Enlightenment gained greater currency and acceptance within the French elite from around 1751, when the first volume of that great summation of the Enlightenment worldview, the *Encyclopédie*, appeared. Indeed, in France appeals to the scientific benefits of exploration seem to have been more insistent and pervasive than in England. This perhaps was a consequence of the French absolutist monarchy's close involvement with the advance of science through its support for the Académie des Sciences. By contrast, in England the monarchy's support for the Royal Society took little more than a symbolic form, and, for much of the eighteenth century, science was not as closely intertwined with the workings of the state.

Such more secular justifications for Pacific exploration rose to a crescendo with the planning of La Pérouse's great voyage. This was intended to put France's stamp on the Pacific in a manner comparable to the way in which the British presence in the Pacific had been advanced by the voyages of Cook. Indeed La Pérouse was to take further France's civilizing mission by extending the range of scientific enquiry made possible by exposure to the Pacific. Baron Gonneville, descendant of the early sixteenth-century explorer who had left the French with a lingering sense of ownership of the Great Southern Land, rose to rhetorical heights in linking the proposed voyage with the promotion of French prestige through the advancement of learning. It was a voyage that he saw as promoting the glory of the French crown because it had "no

other end than that of the truth, no other motive than that of the general good" (Bibliothèque Nationale, NAF 9439, 20, Gonneville to the Minister of the Marine, 19 May 1783).

La Pérouse himself was more candid about the motives of a voyage that had grown out of a commercial venture and that had clear strategic goals. Hence such reports as that on Manila about which he commented that given a moderately sized naval and military force its conquest seemed "easy and so certain." About Chile he remarked that, if the alliance between France and Spain were abandoned, it would be easy "to advance the ruin of Spanish interests" by forming an alliance with the native peoples. Such aggressive reflections he combined with musings, in Enlightenment fashion, on the nature of natural man and admiration for Rousseau, whose bust and works he possessed (Dunmore and de Brossard 1985, 1:5, 220–221).

La Pérouse's voyage was one of the last major projects of the French old regime, but the Baudin expedition of 1800–1804 represented one of the many exercises of Napoleonic patronage of the sciences. But, like its prerevolutionary counterparts, it was characterized by a familiar mixture of Enlightenment idealism and national advantage. As early as 1798 Antoine Jussieu, professor of botany at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, alluded to the way in which scientific and national goals might be combined in a voyage commanded by Baudin. For, he suggested, Baudin could advance the interests of natural history and "render further service to his country" by "combin[ing] geographical researches with those which interest us more particularly" (Horner 1987:36).

The character of some of the researches that were particularly to interest the Napoleonic state was made evident in a letter by the expedition's chief scientist, François Péron, to the commander of the Ile-de-France (Mauritius). For, he wrote, Napoleon's real object in deciding upon the expedition—the need to gather military and strategic intelligence—"was such that it was indispensable to conceal it from the governments of Europe, and

especially from the Cabinet of St. James [Britain] ... all our natural history researches, extolled with so much ostentation by the Governor, were merely a pretext for its enterprise." Flinders' voyage he characterized as having objectives similar to his own (Horner 1987:320). Perhaps Péron was exaggerating the military significance of the voyage for his own ends, but his letter helps to explain why the governor of the Ile-de-France kept Flinders prisoner, dismissing his protestations about the worth of scientific and geographical enquiry. Nor, in other contexts, was Péron himself reluctant to invoke the Enlightenment ideology of the advancement of science as being a pursuit that transcended the petty quarrels between nations—even if national competition provided a healthy spur to such activity. Thus he described "discoveries in the sciences" as "amongst the chief records of the glory and prosperity of nations," particularly as they were "of general utility to all" (Mackay 1989:116).

Given space one could multiply such examples of the admixture of Enlightenment ideology about the virtues of scientific exploration in the Pacific with the pursuit of national commercial or strategic gain from the British side. Cook's Enlightenment-inspired quest to observe the transit of Venus in Tahiti on his *Endeavour* expedition of 1768–1771 was, of course, combined with secret instructions to search for the Great South Land to advance "the honour of this nation as a Maritime Power" and with a view to "the advancement of the Trade and Navigation thereof" (Beaglehole 1955–1974, 1:cclxxxii). Given such mixed motives on this and other Pacific voyages one can better understand the position of the viceroy of Brazil, who so angered Joseph Banks by refusing to allow him to collect botanical specimens on the grounds that this was a cover for spying.

Dalrymple, the great theorist of Pacific exploration—whose speculations urged Cook on in the vain search for the missing Great Southern Land—could, if the need arose, narrow his focus to become a good East India Company man concerned to use Pacific exploration to advance the interests of the

company and, with it, Britain more generally. Accounts of voyages to New Guinea by Forrest in 1771 and Rees in 1783 prompted him to suggest ways in which this might enable the British to challenge Dutch supremacy in the East Indies. Thus he wrote to the Secret Committee of the Company that "I am very confident that wherever the English make a settlement to the Eastward, the Dutch will decline in their consequence" (National Library of Scotland, MS 1068, 89, Dalrymple to East India Company, 21 December 1795). Banks had no illusions about the way in which commercial motives entirely dominated the East India Company's actions. Hence, when the Company granted money for Flinders' proposed circumnavigation of Australia, Banks robustly informed him that "The real reason for the allowance is to Encourage the men of Science to discover such things as will be useful to the Commerce of India & you to find new passages" (Mitchell Library, A79/4, 187, Banks to Flinders, 1 May 1801).

For the Spanish the need to recast their rationale and practice in regard to Pacific exploration was particularly urgent as they faced increasing threats to their empire in the late eighteenth century. Hence the imperative to invoke the Enlightenment ideals of exploration to establish their position as a major Pacific power and to match such rhetoric with action in the form of a major, scientifically based expedition. For the Spanish had painfully learned that their claims to Pacific dominance carried little weight unless they could show that they had truly explored it in a scientific fashion. This was a view that ran counter to their traditional belief that the best method of securing control was through secrecy to ensure that no other nation could gain an advantage through their discoveries (Cook 1973:210, 528, Snow and Waine 1979:36). Mendana, for example, had encountered the Solomons in 1568, giving it that name in the belief that it might contain gold mines like those of King Solomon's mines—a claim that sent many Pacific explorers on a wild-goose chase. For, in the primitive state of cartography that then existed, Mendana had provided no effective

way of allowing others to find these territories again. As far as the eighteenth century was concerned, then, Spanish claims to the Solomons dissolved in the absence of any effective maps that translated such aspirations into reality.

Such considerations explain why, in 1788, the king of Spain accepted an offer by Malaspina, an Italian naval officer in the service of the Spanish monarchy, to mount a voyage of scientific discovery to outshine that of Cook. In his "Plan for a Scientific and Political Voyage around the World" Malaspina gently alluded to the fact that Spain had fallen behind in the race for Pacific dominance by scientific means. "For the past twenty years," he urged, "the two nations of England and France, with a noble rivalry, have undertaken voyages in which navigation, geography and the knowledge of humanity have made very rapid progress" (Engstrand 1981:45). The agenda laid down for the voyage, which lasted from 1789 to 1794, also indicates the extent to which, in the late eighteenth century, exploration was conceived in scientific terms—it was intended that it should bring "new discoveries, careful cartographic surveys, important geodesic experiments in gravity and magnetism, botanical collections, and descriptions of each region's geography, mineral resources, commercial possibilities, political status, native peoples, and customs" (Frost 1988:38). And, indeed, this great and rarely remembered voyage did achieve many of these aims though to little effect. For, on his return, Malaspina was arrested and the fruits of his voyage consigned to oblivion. His political liberalism, especially in regard to the position of the Spanish colonies in the New World, made him suspect at a court the reactionary tendencies of which had been heightened by the revulsion against the nearby revolution in France.

The Malaspina expedition, then, did little to arrest Spain's downhill slide as its claims to Pacific dominance were largely brushed aside by the British, French, and Russians. Nonetheless, it was indicative of the extent to which the view that exploration should be scientifically based had gained ground. But, alongside such Enlightenment-tinged goals,

there were, needless to say, also more pragmatic ends in view. Malaspina was commissioned both to report on the state of Spain's Pacific empire and on possible threats to it—particularly from what, to Spanish eyes, was the chief interloper in the Pacific: Britain. Hence the remarks of one of Malaspina's officers on the settlement of New South Wales that clearly brings out the extent to which the Spanish could recognize the mixed motives of Pacific exploration: "The endeavours of [the] energetic [Cook], his perseverance and labours, besides enriching the sciences of geography, and Hydrography by new discoveries, have placed his nation in a position to compensate itself for the loss of North America" (Frost 1988: 37). What was of particular concern was that the new settlement might act as a naval base for use against the Spanish (Francisco Munoz y San Clemente, *Discurso politico sobre los establecimientos Ingleses de la Nueva-Holanda* [Frost 1988: 37]).

It is not surprising, then, that the major powers in the late eighteenth century embarked on Pacific exploration with the goal of advancing their national interests. But, just as the conquistadors had part rationalized and part justified such motives by invoking the support of the Church and the Crown, so, too, the voyagers of the late eighteenth century felt it incumbent on themselves to point to the ways in which their endeavors could be seen as advancing the cause of science and humanity. The Enlightenment provided much of the language with which to justify one's actions even though contemporaries were well aware of the range of motives of very varying highmindedness that prompted such exploration. Louis Deschamps, one of the naturalists on board D'Entrecasteaux's expedition to search for La Pérouse, summed up the ethos of the great age of late eighteenth-century Pacific voyaging as being the outcome of the Europeans' "restlessness of spirit, curiosity, ambition or greed." As a good French republican, he added, in the spirit of Enlightenment anticlericalism, that though not all governments had "the good faith to encourage philosophy, that mortal enemy of superstition & of despotism . . . all have the good sense to encour-

age geography and natural history" (British Museum, Natural History, Botany Library, Deschamps, *Journal de voyage sur La Recherche . . .*, 110).

How far can it be said that Enlightenment-based justifications for Pacific exploration required more than lip service and, to some extent at least, acted as a brake on the more obvious self-interested motives for exploration? How far, in short, was the great wave of late eighteenth-century Pacific voyaging shaped by an ideology that, like the ideology that had shaped the earlier great wave of Pacific voyaging by the Iberian peoples in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, required at least some element of sacrifice and restraint if it were to be believed?

The most obvious way in which the ideology of Enlightenment exploration did require some such sacrifice was financial. To mount such expeditions was enormously expensive—a cost the French and the Spanish, with their traditions of absolute government, were more willing to bear than the British, who, where possible, relied on the private initiative of naturalists like Banks or Darwin or the scientific inclinations of naval officers like Cook or Flinders.

A second sense in which it did require some restraint of national self-interest was that, to be effective, it involved at least an element of international cooperation, giving some credence to Enlightenment ideas of a cosmopolitan republic of letters. It was an ideal that Gibbon summed up in these terms: "It is the duty of the patriot to prefer and promote the exclusive interest and glory of his native country but a philosopher must be permitted to enlarge his views and to consider Europe as one great Republic whose various inhabitants have attained almost the same level of politeness and civilisation" (Schlereth 1977: 47).

Within the context of late eighteenth-century science and exploration the most conspicuous example of such cosmopolitanism was the way in which Cook's observations of the transit of Venus in Tahiti formed part of an international network with the aim of observing the transit from as many different vantage points as possible (Woolf 1959).

For all their rivalry the European nations came to recognize the advantages that could accrue to all by sharing at least some of the knowledge and expertise that flowed from Pacific exploration. When Bougainville had to abandon his plans for a voyage to the North Pole in 1770, he was willing to accede to the Royal Society's request that he pass on his proposals, which helped to shape the eventual itinerary followed by Captain Phipps in 1773 (National Maritime Museum, MS 57/058, BOG/2). Banks, Britain's chief promoter of such voyages, could encourage Malaspina in his designs, responding enthusiastically to a plea "to co-operate towards the progress of science" (British Library, Add. MS 8097, 216, Malaspina to Banks, 20 January 1789). He also rejoiced at his successes, writing that "In this voyage botany, mineralogy, and hydrography has received much and valuable improvement." In Enlightenment fashion he also congratulated Malaspina on the bloodless character of his voyage for "Their discoveries have not cost a single tear to the human race and they have only lost three or four crew in each vessel" (Bladen 1892-1901, 3:289). When the herbarium of Deschamps was seized by a British corsair, it was returned to him 2 years later through the intervention of Banks (Horner 1996:228). With such events in mind, the French Académie des Sciences was later to acknowledge that establishing the significance of scientific expeditions based on the use of naval power had been largely initiated by Banks (Archives Nationales, BB4/998/2, *Extrait de la Séance du Lundi*, 4 February 1833).

Such scientific cosmopolitanism generally extended to permitting foreign access to ports—though, as the hapless Flinders discovered when he was imprisoned on Mauritius, there were limits to such indulgence during wartime. Though not averse to some spying while they were there, the Spanish and French explorers commented on the warm reception they received when they called into Sydney—a reputation confirmed when, in 1827, the British Admiralty formally granted Dumont D'Urville's *Uranie* "a friendly reception in any British Port of Settlement to which she may repair for purposes of re-

freshment or refit, or from the pursuit of the prescribed astronomical and physical observations" (Archives Nationales, BB4/998, Viscount Castlereagh for the Commissioners of the Admiralty, 16 January 1827). Part of the reason that Pacific exploration lent itself to such courtesies—giving credence to the Enlightenment aspirations that justified the voyages—was that the Pacific, as Dunmore put it, "was large enough for prizes to be available for all, and that there was little in it so valuable that it warranted a clash" (Dunmore 1965-1969, 2:389).

THE DECLINE OF ENLIGHTENMENT IDEALS

However, as the pace of international rivalry in the Pacific increased in the nineteenth century, particularly between the British and the French, the scientific aspect of such voyages diminished as their strategic and imperial goals became more overt (Dunmore 1965-1969, 2:231). By the mid-nineteenth century even the British colonial theorist Edward Wakefield accepted it as a given, as he put it in a letter to the British Prime Minister Robert Peel, "That France has the same right as England to colonise countries the population of which consists of uncivilised tribes" (British Library, Add. MS 40550, 141, Wakefield to Peel, 19 August 1844). As the nineteenth century progressed, Enlightenment ideals of scientific cosmopolitanism faded in the face of the need for voyages to contribute to colonial expansion. Perhaps, too, the incentive for voyages of scientific discovery had diminished as the museums of Europe began to fill up with samples of the flora, fauna, and minerals of the Pacific. From another perspective, too, science itself became more national in character as its scale and importance meant that government involvement became more pronounced.

The greater pace of colonial activity in the nineteenth century also meant a waning of another aspect of the ideology of Enlightenment exploration: its determination to distinguish itself from the age of the conquistadors by acting with greater humanity toward the

native peoples encountered. This formed a very important part of the self-image of the Pacific voyagers. As Andrew Kippis wrote in his contemporary life of Cook: "There is an essential difference between the voyages that have lately been undertaken, and many which have been carried on in former times. None of my readers can be ignorant of the horrid cruelties that were exercised by the conquerors of Mexico and Peru; cruelties which can never be remembered without blushing for religion and human nature. But to undertake expeditions with a design of civilizing the world, and meliorating its condition is a noble object" (Kippis 1883 : 365).

When setting out on his *Endeavour* voyage, Cook, for example, was urged "to endeavour by all proper means to cultivate a friendship with the Natives" and his secret instructions included what was to prove the ironic provision that "You are also with the Consent of the Natives to take possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain" (Beaglehole 1955–1974, 1: cclxxx, cclxxxiii). Behind such rhetoric lay a considerable change in outlook toward non-European peoples. The attitude of superiority based on religion and culture that had been evident in Spanish behavior to the peoples of the Americas or, indeed, the British to the American Indians in the seventeenth century had lessened by the eighteenth century. Once-insular Europe had begun to appreciate that there was much to learn from other peoples and cultures, though in the nineteenth century attitudes of racial superiority based on pseudoscientific grounds began to reassert themselves as the tide of European imperialism gathered force. Relative openness to other cultures and especially those of the Pacific was further strengthened by the rather mixed attitude to the benefits of civilization that was the outgrowth of one strand of Enlightenment thinking. It was this that prompted speculation about the character of the "Noble Savage" that contact with the Pacific at first heightened. This, however, was followed by subsequent disillusionment, which provided impetus for missionary activity and, subsequently, for colonization.

So, once again, we are confronted by the mixed motives of Pacific exploration. On the one hand, they were voyages prompted by the familiar spurs of great power rivalry and the quest for commercial advantage. But such ambitions have existed in all ages and what is interesting is how a period justifies to itself what often appears in retrospect as self-interest. In the great age of Pacific exploration in the late eighteenth century we have seen that the ideological justification for pursuing such ends drew heavily on the language of Enlightenment—on the possibility of promoting human progress through the exercise of reason. Nor was this entirely rhetoric—to gain Enlightenment credentials required considerable expense in the form of a complement of scientific personnel and equipment on board ship and at least some level of international scientific cooperation. Ideally, too, one should display one's Enlightened credentials by keeping to a minimum the number of native peoples killed as a consequence of European intrusion.

The remarkable series of Pacific voyages that occurred between 1764 and 1806 and included the work of Byron, Wallis and Carteret, Bougainville, Cook, La Pérouse, Malaspina, Vancouver, D'Entrecasteaux, Baudin, and Flinders took place in a very different intellectual climate than that of the earlier great age of European oceanic exploration associated with the Spanish and Portuguese entry into the Americas and Asia. It was one in which the quest for gold was still strong though the quest for God had been weakened, if not altogether extinguished. European attitudes of superiority had been lessened by long contact with other cultures, though such attitudes could be easily reawakened. Exploration was conceived of in terms that gave greater prominence to science as the need to map the territory not only in geographical terms but also in terms of flora, fauna, and even its human population became part of any claim to have effective superiority over newly encountered lands (Miller 1996). Underlying such attitudes was a confidence in the power of reason and the possibilities of progress that drew on Enlightenment roots. European intrusion into

the Pacific represented not only the power of ships and firearms but also of a body of ideas that gave purpose and direction to a new phase of European expansion that for good and ill drew a whole new sector of the globe into the larger course of human history.

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